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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

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# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

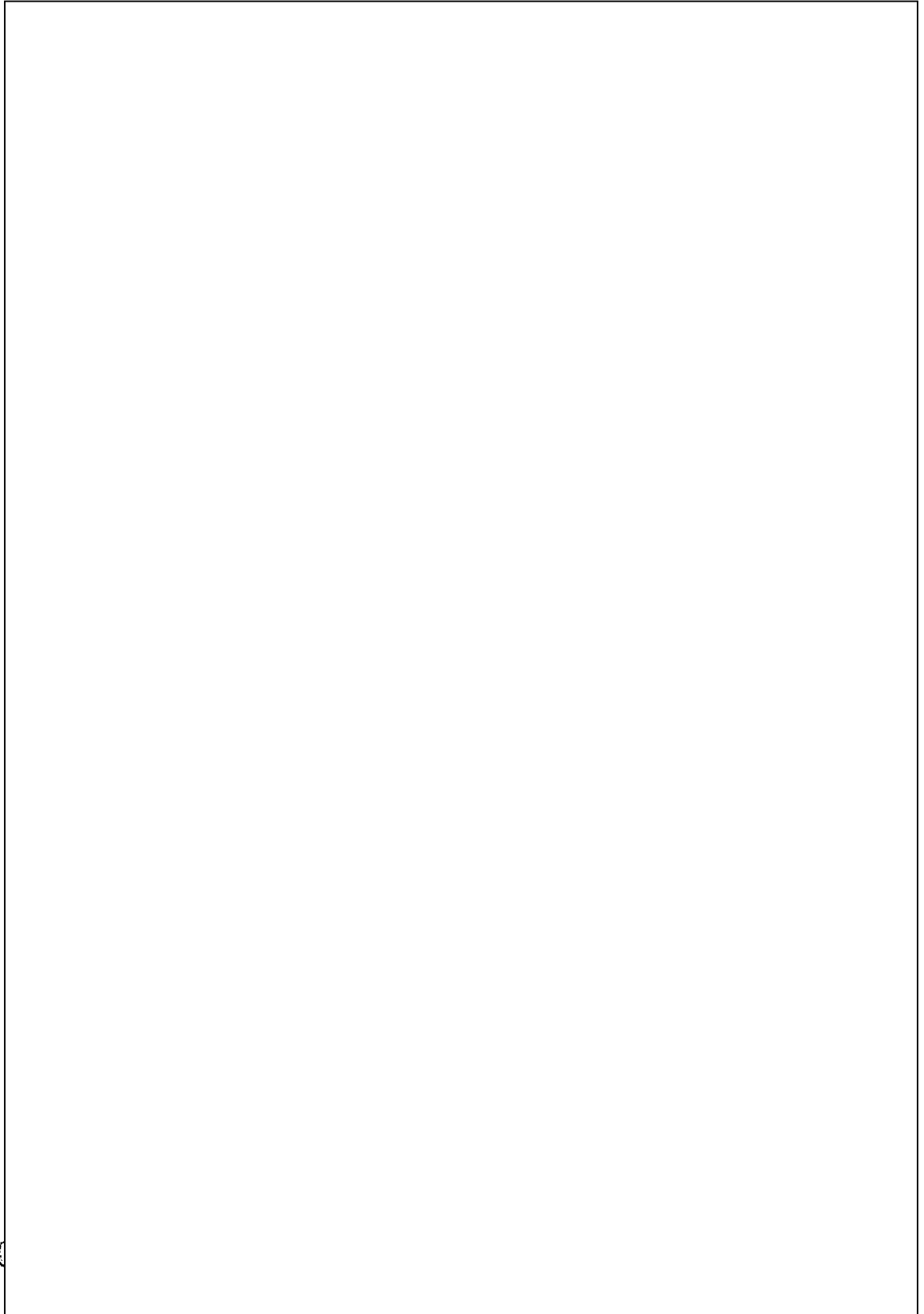
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[ South Vietnam: Criticism of President Thieu's offer to let the Communists' National Liberation Front participate in elections is growing in South Vietnam.

Some of Thieu's political opponents, led by Senator Tran Van Don, are assailing the timing of the speech on the grounds that this made it appear that Thieu was acting on orders from Washington. In addition, some northern Catholics from the Greater Solidarity Force, which belongs to Thieu's new National Social Democratic Front, are breaking ranks to attack his offer as a sign of weakness toward the Communists.

In an apparent effort to soften such criticism, Foreign Minister Thanh on 12 July held a press conference in which he seemed to retreat from positions taken by Thieu. For example, Thanh said that no one who actually advocates Communism would be allowed to run for office; this statement in effect contradicts Thieu's offer to let the Liberation Front participate in elections. The foreign minister stated, moreover, that North Vietnamese forces would have to withdraw north before elections could be conducted.

It is not clear whether Thieu authorized Thanh to make these points, or whether he merely instructed the foreign minister to blunt the critics' attacks.

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(C) Military action remained light throughout South Vietnam on 13-14 July; no significant enemy mortar or rocket attacks were reported. [REDACTED]

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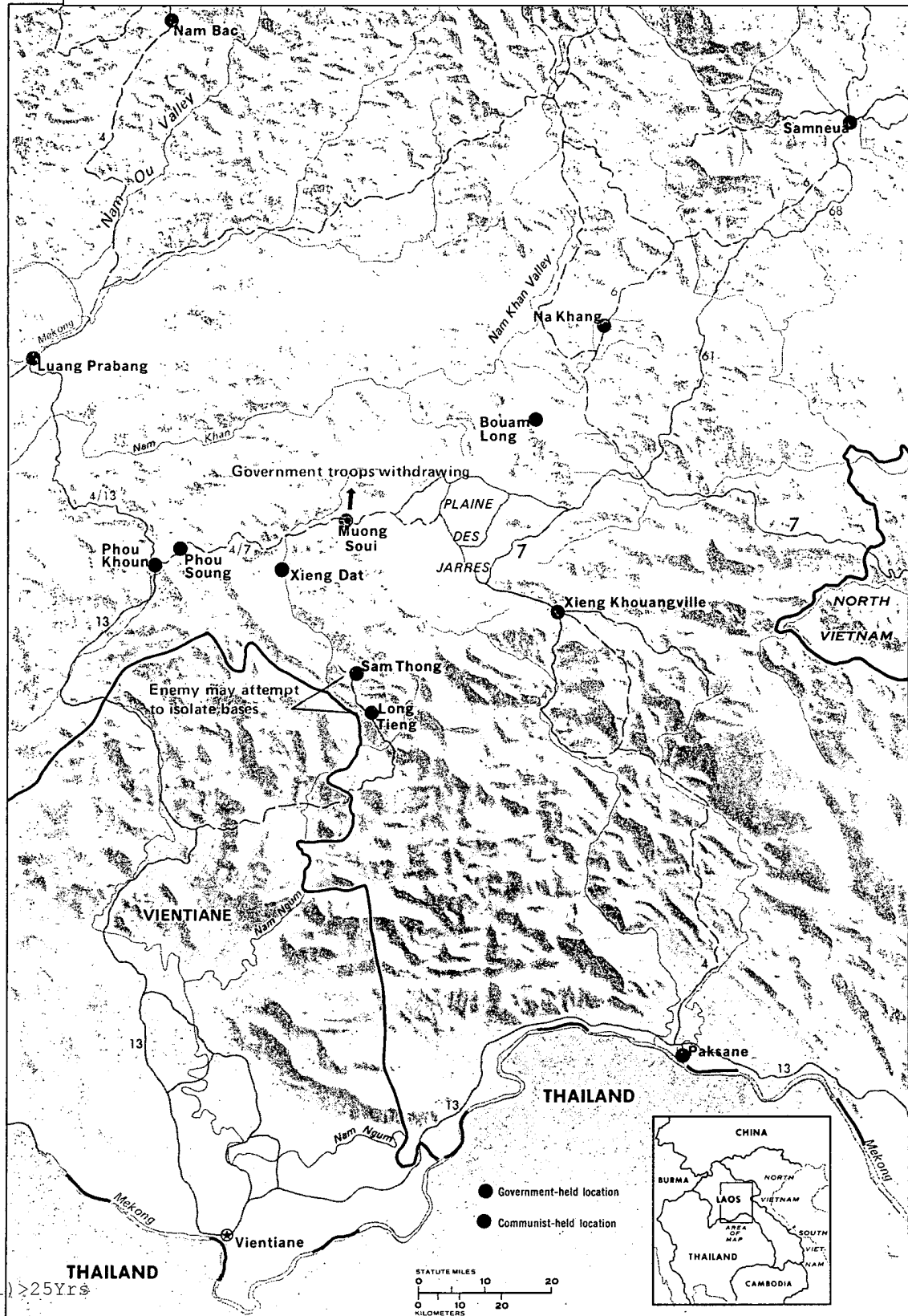
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LAOS



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[ Laos: The government apparently has terminated its campaign to recapture Muong Soui.

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Meo General Vang Pao

[ ] is withdrawing guerrilla and regular army troops that have been pressing toward the Muong Soui complex. The two-week operation had made some headway but unusually poor flying weather, the reluctance of progovernment neutralist troops to carry out their part of the offensive, and a recent decline in the morale of Meo forces apparently convinced Vang Pao that the chances of taking Muong Soui were minimal. The government offensive was not vigorous enough to test Communist intentions but the enemy appeared determined to defend the base.

With the collapse of the effort Vang Pao presumably will now turn his attention to thwarting what he believes will be an early enemy drive westward on Route 7 and then south into northern Vientiane Province.

Vang Pao calculates that the enemy will move in this direction in order to isolate his bases at Long Tieng and Sam Thong. There is no evidence, however, that the Communists will undertake such an ambitious campaign during the current rainy season. [ ] (Map) ]

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Romania-US: The Romanians have demonstrated their keen anticipation of President Nixon's visit by receiving USIA Director Shakespeare with unusual courtesy during his unofficial visit 6-9 July.

In Bucharest as a part of a get-acquainted swing through various countries of Eastern Europe, Shakespeare was treated as a celebrity by the Foreign Office, the State Committees for Art and Radio and Television, and at various social functions. First Deputy Foreign Minister Macovescu invited him back for an official visit. His presence also received due notice in the press, in contrast to 1967 when the then USIA director's unofficial visit went unmentioned.

While such treatment underscores the good state of Romanian-US relations in the cultural field, it also is a part of Bucharest's preparation for President Nixon's visit. The Romanians even moved forward in substantive discussions with Shakespeare on establishing a US library in Romania and exchanging magazines. The Romanians now seem to be ready to reach an early agreement on these questions, which have been in negotiation for some time, probably in order to clear the way for signing during the President's visit.

The Romanians have not been so forthcoming on other outstanding questions of interest to the US, such as the emigration of dual nationals and the reduction of the tight restrictions on US Embassy operations. As its major immediate objective, Bucharest hopes to get most-favored-nation tariff status for goods exported to the US.

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West Germany - USSR: Foreign Minister Gromyko's indication in his speech last week of Soviet readiness to discuss a reduction of tensions over Berlin has aroused strong interest in Bonn.

For several months the West Germans have been urging the Western Allies--the US, France, and the UK--to sound out the Soviets on their willingness to lessen difficulties over Berlin. Specifically, the West Germans hope to make arrangements with East Germany which would facilitate civilian access to West Berlin.

London and Paris were initially skeptical about the sounding proposal; they objected that it might impinge on four-power responsibility for Berlin and that the Soviets would not be interested. In recent days, however, the British and French have appeared willing to proceed.

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Jordan: The government fears there may be a head-on clash with the fedayeen in the next few weeks.

The arrest last weekend of a number of fedayeen who were responsible for the rocket shelling of an Israeli settlement may have brought matters to a head.

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[El Salvador - Honduras: OAS efforts are under way to halt the hostilities which broke out last night between the two countries.

An emergency session of the OAS Council agreed to the Honduran request for a foreign ministers meeting and also decided to send a seven-nation fact-finding committee to work with the Central American mediators. The OAS team, headed by Nicaraguan Ambassador to Washington Sevilla-Sacasa, is expected in San Salvador today.

Salvadoran aircraft bombed and strafed Honduran border positions and the airport at Tegucigalpa. Military officials of both countries reported that fighting had broken out all along their common border.

El Salvador is expected to continue its attack in anticipation of an early cease-fire arrangement by the OAS.

[redacted] a "tremendous euphoria" among officials in San Salvador. They apparently believe that the country's aggressive performance will satisfy domestic clamoring for military action to avenge reverses suffered during past border clashes and alleged mistreatment of Salvadorans in Honduras. Salvador may be willing to accept a cease-fire in hopes of avoiding a Honduran counterattack.

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NOTES

[USSR-US: A Soviet Foreign Ministry official has indicated that Moscow is ready to accept the US proposal for strategic arms limitation talks. [REDACTED] the American section [REDACTED] was uncertain on timing, [REDACTED] thought that 15 August would be a suitable starting date. The Soviets evidently remain flexible regarding the site for the talks. [REDACTED] mentioned that Moscow favors Helsinki, Moscow and Washington in rotation, or Vienna, in that order. [REDACTED]

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Tanzania - Communist China: The Nyerere government apparently intends to accept Chinese assistance in establishing an air force. A Chinese survey team has recommended that an air base be built near Dar es Salaam, and that China supply 20 military aircraft for [REDACTED]. Although the type of aircraft is unknown, the Chinese may be offering jet fighter aircraft--MIG-15s or MIG-17s--which the Tanzanians have been seeking. The team also proposed that 300 to 400 Tanzanians be sent to China for up to two years of training. The Tanzanians have agreed with the recommendations in general and have asked the Chinese to prepare a more detailed study. [REDACTED]

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Israel: The recent effort to purchase [REDACTED] Canadian-manufactured F-86 Sabrejets reportedly has collapsed. Preliminary arrangements had been made through Merex, West Germany's largest arms agent, to buy the aircraft for only [REDACTED]. The arrangement called for Ecuador to act as a third country, but in spite of assurances that Ecuador would be willing to be a "go-between," Ecuador's minister of defense subsequently decided not to go along with the deal. [REDACTED]

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